10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

International Journal of Comparative Sociology

ISSUED BY

THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
KARNATAK UNIVERSITY
DHARWAR, INDIA

[title page]

Volume III — Number 1

September 1962

E. J. BRILL — PUBLISHERS
LEIDEN — THE NETHERLANDS

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

[p. 17]

The Nayar Family in a Disintegrating Matrilineal System[1]

CHIE NAKANE

University of Tokyo, Japan

Introduction

IN this short essay, I will present one case of the disintegration of a Nayar *tarwad* (matrilineal joint family), based on the materials collected by myself.

The general institutional system of a traditional Nayar *tarwad* is already well known, and has been much discussed recently by anthropologists, including K. Gough.[2] Here I state it briefly as a preface to the main discussion. A traditional Nayar *tarwad* was a property group consisting of a matrilineal lineage exclusively, headed and represented by the senior male member, called *karanavan*. Normally the members of a *tarwad* formed a distinguishable domestic unit. Spouses of the members of a *tarwad* resided in the *tarwad* where they were born, and a husband visited his wife at her *tarwad* at night and returned early morning.[3] The father had no duty or obligation on his own children, instead, the *karanavan* was the legal guardian of the offspring of the female members of the *tarwad*.

The Nayars are one of the Hindu upper castes in Kerala, next to the Nambudri Brahman, and traditionally the majority of the Nayars had been land holders or managers, not cultivators. On such a social and economic base, the function of the *tarwad* had been maintained. Various factors have led to the disintegration of the *tarwad* system, the major cause of which, I think, was the economic changes accompanied by modernization since the beginning of the

---

1 This essay is one of the outcomes of my field work on matrilineal systems in India (1955–56) carried out by the generous grant of the Elin Wagner Foundation in Sweden, to which my profound acknowledgement goes. Also I am very thankful for the help of Dr. John Mogey.

2 E. Kathleen Gough: "Changing kinship usages in the setting of political and economic change among the Nayars of Malabar," *J. R. Anthrop. Inst.* 82, pp. 71–87; "A comparison of incest prohibitions and the rules of exogamy in three matrilineal groups of the Marabal," *International Achives of Ethnography*, Vol. XLVI, Part I, 1952, pp. 82–105.

3 The *karanavan* was an exception: he could take his wife and children in his *tarwad*. In North Malabar, not only the *karanavan*, but also other male members used to take their wives and children to their *tarwad*. However, these wives, including children, had to leave their husband's *tarwad*, as soon as their husband died.

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

19th century. In this connection, I was much interested in studying court records and various documents, including *the Nayar Regulation II, 1925, Travancore*, and *the Malabar Marumakkathayam Act of 1933*, which legally marked the end of the functional Nayar *tarwad* system. Actual partition of an individual *tarwad* occured earlier, or later, than these acts.[1] However the present discussion is concerned mainly with the internal situation of the *tarwad* as it disintegrated, the discussion of external factors and causes of the disintegration of the *tarwad* are omitted.

The process of the disintegration of the *tarwad* can be summarized in terms of the essential elements which constitute the functional body of a *tarwad:*

A. members of a matrilinial lineage exclusively
B. co-residential (domestic) unit
C. property owning unit
D. headed by the *karanavan*
E. Ceremonial unit.

In the disintegration of the *tarwad*, the group loses these elements gradually. The element which is lost first seems to be *B*. A population which exceeds the limit of the accomodation of a *tarwad* building, results in residential separation of small segments of a matrilineal group who have the same grandmother, or grand-grandmother, called *tawari*. Such a group, residing in a separate household, in the course of time tends to develop as a temporal economic unit. Though the ancestral property is held in common by all members of the *tarwad* together, the residential sub-group would become a semi-independent productive and consumption unit: the income would not be pooled into the *tarwad* but consumed by the members of each group. Hence the function of the *karanavan* as the head of the *tarwad*, the property group, becomes incomplete.

At the same time, when the residential unit becomes smaller, it would give chances for the inclusion of spouses and the element A would be shaken. The cohabitation of wife and husband leads to the inclusion of nonmatrilineal members in a matrilineal residential group. These factors bring on economic and psychological confusion in the duties and obligations of a *tarwad* member. Thus, by the destruction of elements *A*, *B*, and *C*, the status of the *karanavan* becomes ambiguous. There occur various disputes between the *karanavan* and other members on the rights of the *tarwad* property.

This situation is enhanced by the fact that an increase of members who have an independent income without depending on the *tarwad* property, form an independent household with his wife and children. This situation makes it difficult to maintain the *tarwad* as a property unit, and also infringes the function of the *karanavan*. In fact the actual contribution of the father who was not the legal guardian of his children is significant in the failure of the role of the *karanavan* for the matrilineal members. Thus at last a *tarwad* has no alternative

---

1 A report of my study on these legal documents, including materials given in this paper, was published in Japanese: "On the disintegration of the Nayar *tarwad*," *Memoirs of the Institute for Oriental Culture*, University of Tokyo, Vol. 14, pp. 1–131, 1958.

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

except to cease to function, and to divide the *tarwad* property among individual members. Theoretically the loss of the elements *A*, *B*, *C* and *D* marks the end of the *tarwad* institution. Nevertheless, the *tarwad* is still conceptualized as a distinctive social and ceremonial group by the element *E*, in spite of the loss of all other elements.

In 1956 (March-June) when I studied the Nayar, most of the *tarwad* in Kerala had already ceased to exist as a functional body. In a large building named *tarwad* where once lived more than fifty members of a matrilineal family, I found only a few members: such as an old mother and her daughter with her husband and children. The members of each *tarwad* were dispersed, forming independent small households each with a spouse and children, having already partitioned the *tarwad* property. Many of the older generation who are aged fifty and the head (father) of the household consisting of an elementary family, were born in a *tarwad*, and had experiences of the *tarwad* life. They are the people who lived through the dramatic stage of the disintegration of the *tarwad*. Their life history itself reflects the great changes in the Nayar matrilineal system.

It is extremely interesting to study through these living members the process, by which the members of a *tarwad* organized on a strict matrilineal principle, without allowing cohabitation of husband and wife, gradually reorganized into many individual elementary families in the course of half a century. The disintegration of the Nayar system as a whole took about two centuries but it seems that the actual disintegration of an individual *tarwad* is about half a century. The following discussion deals with how individual members acted at various stages of the disintegration of the *tarwad;* and what the changes of the matrilineal system actually mean to those individuals who are involved; and what are the consequences of the disintegration of the *tarwad*.

Marayil Tarwad

The *tarwad* which I have chosen for study is named Marayil, and one of the Nayar *tarwad* in Ernaklum, Cochin. This *tarwad* had many advantages for my purposes. The majority of the members of the *tarwad*, who now form many different households, still reside near each other, within the thirty minutes walk. The number of the descendants of the foundress of the *tarwad* amounts to 94 altogether in May 1956, ranging through seven generations. Many *tarwad* were much bigger in numbers, and deeper in generations, than this. Another advantage is that it represents a *tarwad* of a typical upper middle class among the Nayar caste in this area: present occupations of these members are government officials, advocates, teachers, etc. They have very friendly relationships with many other Nayars in this area, and are thought of as respectable people. The husbands, at every generation, are all Nayars, without a single case of a marriage with a Nambudri Brahman, as is common among the upper class Nayar in this area, nor with a Irawa, the caste below the Nayar.

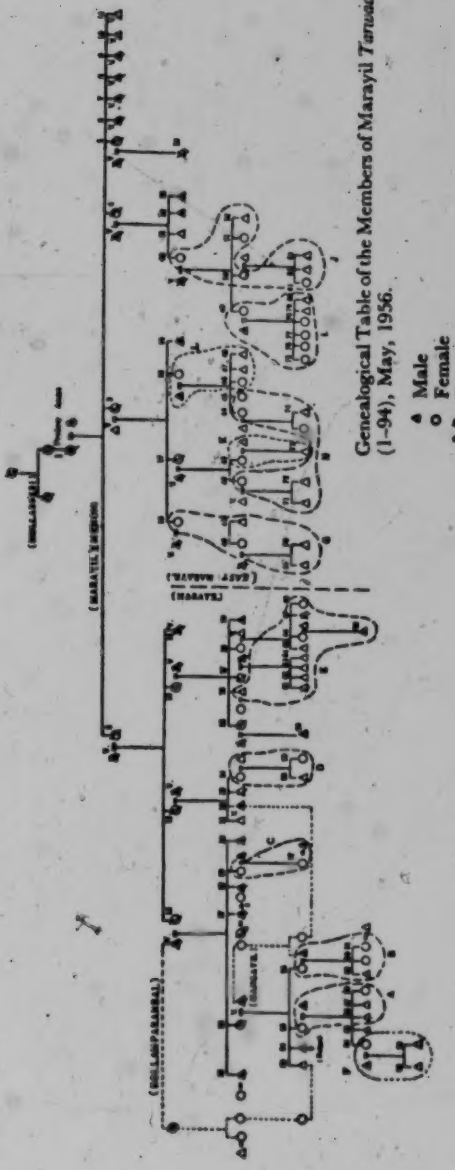
Marayil *tarwad* was founded around 1830. The first partition by which the

[text continues on p. 21]

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

[Marayil Tarwad]

601
613
594



Genealogical Table of the Members of Marayil *Tarwad* (1–94), May, 1956.

▲ Male
○ Female
▲● Dead
▲' Husbands who practised a visiting marriage
▲ Husband who established his own household with his wife and children
◌ Independent household; households of F, K and L are not in Ernakulam.

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

[Marayil Tarwad]

by which the Marayil tarwad was founded around 1830. The first partition *tarwad* split into two residential groups (Marayil and East Marayil), occurred in 1898, and the final partition of the property by individual members was in 1944.

In May 1956 the living members of the *tarwad* were grouped into ten different households (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and J of the Diagram); the male members who are not included in these groups formed each household with wife and children. The relationships of these households show that the degree of familiarity is paralleled with the genealogical distance as well as geographical distance. According to my own observations, the following different stages of the matrilineal group consciousness were noticeable.

First, the strong coherence of matrilineal members, appear in the groups consisting of the members of A, B, and C, and that of D and E. The members of each group meet almost every day; their daily life gives an impression as if they were still carrying on the *tarwad* life. For example, when one household is visited by a guest, others are usually called to join the talking, and often enjoy tea and meals together. In fact, the households of each group are direct neighbours of each other.

Secondly, the group whose members have the same grand-grandmother (consisting of A-B-C and D-C together) is distinguished by the amount of contact of its members with each other, against other members. They meet at least two or three times a week. The third level of group consciousness appears in the group consisting of all descendants of the foundress, including both Marayil and East Marayil. If necessary, they visit each other; if they pass near a house of the group, they are ready to visit. The manner of speaking is a bit more formal than that of first and second groups. However this is distinguished as the ceremonial unit. Though they lost the function of the property group (Mudal Sambantham), they maintain strongly the function of the ceremonial group (Pula Sambantham); funerals, marriages and seasonal festivities are carried out by these members altogether. For this corporate unit, 32 (refer to the number of the Diagram) is acting as the head. This is indeed the last function which is left for the members of Marayil *tarwad*; it is the matrilineal lineage with the same history; all members clearly can trace their genealogical relations with each other.

Further than this range, there is no group consciousness, but these members of Marayil *tarwad* observe exogamy from those members of Mullasseri, another *tarwad*, from which Marayil had sprung. Though they cannot trace exact genealogical relationships, by the observation of exogamy, Mullasseri members are considered as matrilineal distant kin, sociologically different from other Nayars.

Disintegrating Process of Marayil Tarwad

Based on the information of the present members the Marayil was founded by Prabaty Amma (*1*). The process of the foundation of this *tarwad* is as follows:

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

[Marayil Tarwad]

613 193 The story goes back to the early 19th century. Prabaty Amma who came to visit a temple in Ernaklum, met a young Nayar man. Soon after they were fallen in love, and married. The name of this young man was Narayana Panikkar, who was a district officer in Palgat, and later became the *karanavan* of his *tarwad*. By the right of the *karanavan*, he took his wife to his *tarwad*.

613 193 591 968 Thirty years after their marriage, Narayana Panikkar died. According to the law of the Nayar, his wife and children had to leave from his *tarwad* at the moment of his death. Prabaty Amma accompanied with her children left his *tarwad*, but she did not return to her natal *tarwad*, Mullasseri. Instead, she decided to reside in the house which had been built by her husband for her as a gift. She named this *tarwad* Marayil, thus she and her children became independent from Mullasseri *tarwad*. It was said in this time, her mother's *tarwad*, Mullasseri, was so full with her matrilineal kin, hence she preferred to reside in this new house with her sons and daughters. This house is at present occupied by E. group. At the establishment of this new *tarwad*, I think, she must have had some land, or managing rights in farming land, given by her natal *tarwad* or by her husband as a gift, but I failed to discover the economic basis on which this *tarwad* life had been carried on.

613 175 Thus established, the new *tarwad* grew bigger in the course of time. In 1898, the increase of its members led to the first residential partition into two groups, as already stated. It was twenty years after the marriage of the granddaughter of Prabaty Amma, *12* and her daughter *29* who was born in 1888, was ten years old, and *39* is said to have been born in this *tarwad* around this year. From these data, it can be assumed that all members from *1* to *39* of Marayil *tarwad* lived in this *tarwad* building together. The situation of the members of this old *tarwad* before the partition in 1898 is as follows.

613 591 593 182 175 Married members of this *tarwad* mostly practiced "visiting marriage" (see Diagram, the majority of male members were visiting husbands). Seventeen out of twenty-three cases of marriages in the second and the third generations, took a visiting form. Five cases who did not practice "visiging marriage" were younger ones of the third generation, whose ages are almost equal to those of the older members of the fourth generation. In the fourth generation, the cases of the visiting marriages decreased to four out of nineteen cases. These facts reveal that the residential pattern became more neolocal than duolocal during the fourth generation: by this time many had already established independent households in which they lived with their wife and children, having an independent income. These members are shown by ▲ in the Diagram.

A more careful examination of this Diagram, reveals that this tendency had already started in the third generation, as appeared in the case of the husband of *12*, Nando Pillai. He had used to visit his wife for twenty years after his marriage. He was a brilliant and successful man who had an important post in the palace of the Cochin Maharaja, which allowed him to accumulate considerable wealth. He made a new *tarwad* building for his sisters as their *karanavan*, and again in 1898 he built a new beautiful *tarwad* with a big garden, where he himself lived with his wife and children, thus making his wife independent from her *tarwad*. This house is at present occupied by the C group.

613 591 175 182 Then Marayil *tarwad* already suffering from over population, stimulated by this event, split into two groups: one was the *tawari* of eldest daughter of Prabaty Amma, another was that of the second and third daughters. The latter

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

[Marayil Tarwad]

group was named "East Marayil," while the former retained the original name "Marayil." The property was not entirely divided, but managed independently. The group of East Marayil shifted their residence to one mile east of the original one.

After the first partition, in the new Marayil group where I concentrated my study, the *karanavan* was at this time *15*. Among the members of this group, *12* and her sons and daughters had a separate residence built by her husband, Nando Pillai, and supported by him without help from her *tarwad*. It seems to have been already customary in this period among those Nayars who had a considerable individual income, to establish an independent household for their elementary families, as in the case of Nando Pillai. By these men a new type of family came into being alongside the matrilineal joint family.

Nevertheless, it was to take a long time for the establishment of such an elementary family with a neolocal residence pattern among the majority of the Nayars. As the next generation of this case shows, in spite of the paternal activities of Nando Pillai, the family retained its matrilineal pattern. His eldest daughter did not leave the house, and her husband practiced the traditional visiting marriage; the second daughter *29* returned to this house after her husband, who was the *karanavan* of another *tarwad*, died. However, his sons left his house each establishing an independent house where they lived with their wives. As a result, the first and second daughters, with their children, occupied this house, which produced a very similar pattern to a traditional *tarwad*, except for the absence of married out male members.

Through this picture, we can see that the role of the husband/father lies in the establishment of a new segment of a matrilineal group, rather than in the establishing of a nonmatrilineal system. The basic framework of the Nayar system was still matrilineal in this stage. As the result, a *tarwad* or Nayar household was often occupied by some married female members and their children, though the total number of the matrilineal members decreased rapidly by marrying-out members.

The fact that husbands of *26* and *38* did practice visiting marriage might give an impression that they were very old fashioned in their time, but it is really the outcome of the residential situation in the transitional stage: for some of the female members, it was natural to remain in the vacant *tarwad*; and a husband might not have enough economic resources to establish a new house for his wife and children, or might be occupied by the work of his own *tarwad*.

Such a stage also introduced uxorilocal marriage which was new to the Nayar. A husband, instead of building a new house for his wife and children, used the vacant wife's *tarwad* or wife's house built by her father, and he supported his family largely by his own income, as in the cases of *25*, *34* and *53*. Therefore, even in such uxorilocal cases, paternal authority was well developed. When the *tarwad* was in full function, the Nayar never practiced uxorilocal residence, though there were cases of virilocal residence. Uxorilocal residence in this case is irrelevant to the matrilineal system: it came into the picture because of the disintegration of the matrilineal system. It should be treated as a different problem from the uxorilocal residential patterns of other matrilineal systems.

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

[Marayil Tarwad]

613 The increase in the establishment of paternal elementary families gradually
425 split the *tarwad* into pieces, lessening the function of the *tarwad*. This Marayil
175 *tarwad* finally divided its property between individual members in 1944, as did
182 many *tarwad* in this period. This was forty-seven years since the first partition in 1898, and this period saw the disintegration of this *tarwad*.

613 The members of the fourth and fifth generations in the Diagram make up
175 the transitional period: they had the *karanavan* as the head of the *tarwad* and at
182 the same time they played a role of the husband/father as in a patrilineal family. Their duties and obligations were transitional from those of the *karanavan* to
[593] those of the father. Though by law then the *karanavan* was the legal guardian of
[429] the members of a *tarwad*, actually the father who lived with his children was already *de facto* guardian of his children. These individuals were pulled in their obligations and duties between their matrilineal kin and their wives and children. In fact they differentiated their roles according to the economic and residential circumstances in which they were involved, though the degree of differentiation differed from individual to individual.

613 When the fifth generation were in their youth, the *karanavan* of the *tarwad*
593 was *15*. According to the Nayar rule the duty of the fostering and educating
175 these members should be performed by *15*. However, in actuality among these
182 members, those who had been given a higher education by the *karanavan* were sons of *13* and *14* (*31*, *32*, *33*, *36* and *39*), while that of the sons of *12* (*25*, *27*, *28* and *30*) was given by their father. The latter's case is indeed the result of the father's economic ability and his affection towards his children whom he lived with. Yet this father, on the other hand, made also a considerable economic contribution to the members of his own *tarwad* as the *karanavan*. Thus such a man played the two roles of father and *karanavan* at the same time.

613 Such behaviour and contributions created ambivalent psychological
602 inclinations among his descendants through his wife as well as through his sisters. For example, the descendants of *12* who live now partly on property left by
421 *12*'s husband, tend to complain that their grandfather's sisters' daughters who
175 live in the house built by *12*'s husband, are enjoying property left by their
182 grandfather. They said that "they are enjoying our grandfather's property," a situation reasonable from the point of view of the working of the matrilineal system, since "our grandfather" is "their maternal uncle." Here we see an interesting fact that they think in terms of the father (grandfather): "the father (grandfather) is of ours." At the same time, they have a tendency to expect and depend on the economic help from *32* and *27*, who are their matrilineal kin. In fact *57* after the death of her father, was economically helped by *32* and (27), which she took for granted. Among these members at the transitional stage, a confusion of rights and obligations is obvious.

613 In such an unstable situation involving ambivalent elements, what gave
582 them a certain satisfaction or solution was cross-cousin marriage. The marriage
175 of *53*, whose wife is his classificatory cross-cousin brought satisfaction to both
182 matrilineal groups (Marayil and Kallamparanbal), because by this marriage both parties would have a chance to enjoy, and exercise rights on, the property

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

left by *12*'s husband for the kingroups of both his wife and his sisters, since both inclined to demand rights on the property left by him to the other party. The marriage of *56* also involved a similar situation for both members of Marayil and Mangayil in order to enjoy the economic activity of *32*.

Traditionally the Nayar tended to marry among particular *tarwad* (not necessarily two), between which friendly relationships, expressed in terms of *enanger*, had been established. Hence many marriages fall into the category of the cross-cousin marriage. However, the above cited cases were obviously meant to solve the ambivalent economic situation arising from the disintegrating stage of the *tarwad* system; and so it was explained to me. The present younger generation strongly avoid cross-cousin marriage, as they think it is not good biologically. However, whether they dislike it or not, after the disintegration of the *tarwad* system the cross-cousin marriage itself is losing its social and economic function.

Matrilineal Elements in the Present Nayar Family

In spite of the final partition of the *tarwad* property, and the establishment of elementary family households which made the *tarwad* functionless, the ideology of the *tarwad* (matrilineal system) still persists in various aspects of the life of the present Nayar.

In the new system, in theory, the husband established an independent house for himself and his wife, freed from both his *tarwad* and her *tarwad*, but it is interesting to observe that the house built by the husband is found near to his wife's *tarwad*, unless his job forced him to leave their birth place. The picture is that of a set of households whose wives are sisters, grouped in a certain area. For instance the husbands of *55* and *66* built their houses very near to that of the C group, which was built by the father of *29*: these three households are very close to each other, across narrow lanes and a garden. The behaviour of these members was described on page 21.

This might give an impression that women tend to attach to their matrilineal members more than men do. However, men also have very close attachments to their sisters, and are always ready to give moral and economic help to them, in spite of living at a greater distance from them. It was the traditional custom to marry a member of a *tarwad* situated in the same local area, since this was certainly convenient for visiting marriage, and also owing to the inter *tarwad* political relationships. Hence husbands and their sisters easily can visit each other, even after residential separation. Such frequent visits among the members of the matrilineal group maintain great familiarity among them. So far as my own observation goes, a man who has considerable income helps his poorer sisters almost in a same way as he does his wife and children. They themselves say they have often trouble about which they should care for more, wife or sister. They told me, that today they were well aware that they should do their best for their wife and children with whom they live, but they also could not help loving and caring for their sisters and sisters' children very much.

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

613 This psychological pull towards matrilineal kin also applies to the wives.
593 When they decide an important matter they always ask their maternal uncle's
604 advice, as well as that of their husband. Even the younger generation have great
182 affection for, and a tendency to depend on, the mother's brothers almost in the same way they do their father. Particularly, if the father dies, it is the mother's brother who actually takes the responsibility. (See the case of *57*.

613 I think the function of matrilineal elements found in these relations is largely
591 supported by the fact that matrilineal members reside near each other, where
182 they can meet almost every day. Indeed the factors which are vital to the destruction of matrilineal coherence are created by those members who established their life with their wife and children in places geographically distant from the land of the Nayar, Kerala, such as New Delhi, Bombay or Calcutta, for example the members of F, K and L in Diagram. In earlier phases of a marriage, a man who has to reside very far away because of his job, usually leaves his wife in her mother's house (as the cases of *91*, *44* and *50*), but when his job becomes permanent and he has children, usually he takes his wife and children to his new place. In the course of time, these members tend to have less and less contact with their matrilineal kin at home, which naturally leads to social and economic distance from the latter.

Thus the dispersion of members in terms of geographical distance affects to the actual function of the matrilineal group. In fact I found that the style of talking about the members of F, K and L sounds considerably different from that used for the members who reside in the same locality. If geographical distance is within Kerala, it is a quite different matter from the case of outside
[844] Kerala: for example, a member of a matrilineal group in Ernaklum, resides at
[796] Trivandrum. In such a case, wife certainly comes back to her mother's house for child birth, and the members come together at important ceremonial occasions of the matrilineal group. Within Kerala, the land of Nayar, such activities are taken for granted in the society.

613 A great geographical dispersion of the members results in the decrease of
591 the functional members of the matrilineal group centred on the *tarwad*, but on
602 the other hand, this local matrilineal group would increase its size by peripheral
182 members of non-matrilineal descendants: children of the matrilineal male members including their wives. These children stand very close to their father's matrilinineal kin, with whom their father keeps frequent contact. The children feel the matrilineal kin of their father equally important to that of the mother. When all matrilineal members lived in a *tarwad*, the children were aware of the *tarwad* members of their non-resident-father, recognizing them as an important affinal group *(tarwad)*. But I think the degree of familiarity towards these
[594] members greatly differs from that towards the matrilineal kin of the father with whom they live. Today the actual importance of the father who is the authority
182 in the household, brings *his* matrilineal kin much closer to his children.
613 It is very interesting, I found, that in all households, the fathers of which
602 were the members of Marayil *tarwad*, an enlarged picture of Prabaty Amma,
353 the foundress of the *tarwad*, was placed at the centre of the guest room. Their

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

children regard this picture of Prabaty Amma as that of their ancestress through their father. It appears from this symbol, combined with the frequent visits of their father's sisters and their children, that the father's matrilineal kin are conceptualized as if they were that of the mother. This tendency is greater in the case of the wife and children of *32*, which I think largely derives from the fact that *32* is playing the role of the central figure of the Pula Sambantham of his matrilineal group, and that his wife is a member of Mangayil *tarwad*, which is one of the important and close affinal matrilineal groups to Marayil members: the mother's brother and brother of *32*'s wife also married with members of Marayil *26* and *56*.

In spite of the inclination of these children towards their father's matrilineal group, and paternal authority being well established, they still maintain the surname of the male members of their mother's matrilineal group.[1] In Trivandrum the Nayar said to me it depended on the individual free choice whether one should take the father's surname or the mother's brother's: in fact, I found some of them taking their father's surname. However, among the Nayar in Ernaklum, all they are taking mother's brothers' surname and they are proud to do so.

The greater approach of the children to their father's matrilineal group seems to me largely due to their father's important status in his matrilineal group, the members of which live very near to him, combined with his distinguished economic activities, which make him maintain closer contact with his matrilineal kin. For example, if *32* was not the central figure in his matrilineal group, and poor, and on the other hand his wife had a very wealthy uncle to help her now and then, his wife and children might have more attachment to their mother's matrilineal kin, rather than to the father's.

In such a transitional stage, including the earlier stage of the disintegration of the *tarwad* as already discussed, a man has two orientations, to his matrilineal group and to his elementary family. And a man stands balanced between the two groups, differentiating his role according to the circumstances in which he is involved. In this situation to decide a man's behaviour the given law seems less effective than the actual situation in which an individual is involved. *36* who married and once resided in his wife's *tarwad*, later returned to his own *tarwad*, taking the role of a *karanavan* of his old *tarwad*. He said that he felt his need as a guardian for his sister's children, as there was no grown up male member in this *tarwad* building, but he did not mind leaving his wife and grown-up daughters and sons behind. This case should be compared with the case of Nando Pillai who lived his later life with his wife and children, though he was the legal guardian *(karanavan)* of his *tarwad*.

1 Among Nayars, traditionally the surname is used for only male members of a *tarwad*, while female members are called by her maiden name, adding the term "Amma" instead of the surname, after their initiation ceremony. All male members of a *tarwad* share the same surname: for example, the surname of Marayil members is Menon. However, since the same surname is used by many *tarwad* among the Nayars, it does not necessarily indicate common descent lines.

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

613
182

The observed ambivalent attitudes found in Nayar men during and after the disintegration of the *tarwad* system is very similar to that of many matrilineal peoples, where the system allows the cohabitation of husband and wife. There it is a characteristic feature that a man is placed in an ambivalent situation between the obligations and duties towards his own matrilineal kin and towards his wife and children. From this angle, the present Nayar still live in the matrilineal atmosphere. It is very interesting to speculate where Nayar system will go. How long does it take the Nayar to become free from a matrilineal ideology, the shadow of the *tarwad* life? Many of the present Nayar population have experiences of the *tarwad* life, so the real change might be expected in the next generation. However, even then, it seems to me it would not shift to a patrilineal system, though it could possibly take the patrinominal system with a kind of bilateral arrangement. Whatever it may be, I think the future of the Nayar family and kinship system presents one of the most interesting examples for its study of the effects of historical and economic changes on a kinship system; and how far this kinship ideology can persist.

178

/Information on recent socio-cultural disintegrative changes in the tarawad will be found in category 182./

631
642

/For specific information on the political division of the Kerala state see the following:
kingdoms---635
nads (chiefdoms)---634
desams (villages)---621./

794
795

/Information on Nayar "snake cults" has been filed in the following categories: snake shrines and temples--778; snakes as deities--776; general beliefs about snakes--825; the "snake cult" as a part of the general religious order of the Nayars--771; ceremonial practices associated with the "cult"--796./

/For religious ceremonies and feasting associated with the Nayar Tali-rite, see category 588./

/Data on the Tali-tying ceremony performed for the pre-pubescent Nayar girl, will be found in category 588./